(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Clearance to environmental projects in Assam

382. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of projects from Assam Government for getting environmental clearance pending with the Central Government;

(b) the details of specific reasons for delay in giving the environmental clearance, project-wise; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) There are no projects of Government of Assam pending for environmental clearance.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Illegal encroachments on forests land

383. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been number of cases reported of illegal encroachments on forests lands in the country, despite Supreme Court order issued in 1996;

(b) if so, what action has been taken by the Government to tackle this problem;

(c) whether the Government realize this as the main cause of animal species becoming extinct; and

(d) if so, what plan Government would draw to tackle this problem in future?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) In compliance of the Supreme Court's order, the Ministry of Environment and Forests have issued directions in the months of May and October, 2002 respectively, to the various State Governments and Union Territory Governments to deal with the issue of the encroachments seriously and evict the ineligible encroachers from the forest lands in a time bound manner as per the guidelines of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Also, the various State Governments/UT Governments have been told that the eviction process should be monitored at the highest level and accountability should be fixed for inaction.

(c) Biotic pressure on forests increases with encroachment on forest lands. Though, encroachment may not be direct and the main cause of extinction of animal species, it certainly makes flora and fauna endangered and thus it may cause extinction ultimately.

(d) Government is committed to remove all ineligible encroachments from forest lands and protected area with the help of the State Governments/UT Governments in accordance with the law.

Japanese assistance to clean Ganga

384. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government with the assistance of Japan International Cooperation propose to take up a project to improve the quality of water in the river Ganga;

(b) if so, the details of the agreement signed in this regard; and

(c) by when the project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) The Japan International Cooperation Agency of the Government of Japan has recently agreed to provide technical assistance for taking up a study on 'Water Quality Management Plan